

# Decatur Daily Republican.

COL. VIII.

DECATUR, ILLINOIS, MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1879.

NO. 231

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### CLARENCE SCARF, LEANDER SCARF, DONIZETTI SCARF, AND ALL THE LATEST NOVELTIES IN SCARF PINS, SCARF RINGS, CUFF BUTTONS

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ALSO WE HAVE THE

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BUSINESS AND DRESS

#### SUITS,

IN THE CITY

#### AND LACES

#### IN THE CITY

#### AND LACES

####





# THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW.

A TALE OF  
The Empire Under Peter The Great.

## CHAPTER I

### THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW.

The time at which we open our story is mid winter, and towards the close of the seventeenth century, Russia had passed through the long and bitter ordeal of national Night. The Tartar yoke had been worn till the very bones of the nation were galled, and when this was thrown off civil dissensions and intestine wars commenced. The Polish and Swedes plundered the country, and amid general tumult and confusion some half dozen men were clamoring for the throne. At length a few patriotic cutters, pledging everything they held dear on earth to the cause of freedom from this curse of anarchy, and headed by a noble prince and an humble, patriotic butcher made a noble stand to save the country. Moscow was taken, and Michael Romanoff was chosen Czar, and this illustrious family still occupies the imperial throne. And now the day of Russia's greatness dawned, but the sun was not fairly up—the broad light opened not upon the empire—until Peter came to the throne.

In the department of the Suburbia—the suburbs of Moscow—and very near the river Moskva, stood an humble cot, the exterior of which betrayed a neatness of arrangement and show of taste that more than made up for its smallness of size. Nor was it very small in fact, but only in contrast, for near at hand about it stood many large, shabby, dirty looking structures that overlooked the plain, as bleak mountains may look down upon a verdant land. And, within, this cot was as neat as without. The two apartments in front, one of which was only used in winter, were furnished not only with neatness, but with a fair show of ornament and luxury. Back of these were a large cooking and dining room and two small bedchambers, and back still from these was an artisan's shop, and other out buildings. This shop was devoted to the manufacture of firearms, mostly. Some swords, and other two-edged weapons were made here upon special application.

The gunmaker now stood by his forge watching the white smoke as it curled up towards the throat of the chimney. He was a young man, not over three and twenty, and possessed a frame of more than ordinary symmetry and muscular movement. He was not large—not above medium size, but a single glance at the swelling chest, the broad shoulders, and the sinewy ridges of the brawny arms, told at once that he was master of great physical power. His features were regular, yet strongly marked, and manly handsome; his brow, which was full and high, was half covered by the light brown curls that waved over it while his eyes, which were of a bright brilliant, deep gray in color, lent a touch of genius to the intellect of the brow. His name was Ruric Nevel. His father had been killed in the then late war with the Turks, and the son, leaving the mother with a sufficiency of sustenance, went to Spain soon after the bereavement. There he found work in the most noted armories, and now, well versed in the trade, he had returned to his native city to follow his calling and support his mother.

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The sun had been some time below the horizon, and the only light of any consequence that made things partially visible within the shop came from the dull blaze of the coals on the forge, as Paul ever and anon bore down upon the brake that moved the bellows. Suddenly Ruric started back from the forge as his mind broke from the deep reverie into which he had fallen, and having laid his boy to see that matters were all properly disposed for the night, he turned towards the door, and was soon in the kitchen, where his mother had supper all prepared and set out.

Claudia Nevel was a noble looking woman, and the light of her still hand some countenance was never brighter than when gazing upon her boy. She had seen the snows of fifty winters, and of them had left some silver upon her hand, and some age marks upon her face, the sunshine of many summers had left her with a thankful loving heart and a prayerful, hopeful soul.

"It is snowing again, faster than ever," remarked Paul, as he took his seat at the table.

"Ah," returned Ruric, resting his knife a few moments while he bent his ear to listen to the voice of the storm. "I had hoped 'would snow no more for the present. The snow is deep enough now. And how it blows!"

"Never mind," spoke the dame in a trustful, easy tone, "it must storm when it lists, and we can only thank God that we have shelter, and I pray for those who have none."

"Amen!" responded Ruric fervently.

After this the trio remained some minutes silent, seeming to be listening to the storm notes that came pealing about the cot. The wind was high, and the snow now came dashing upon the windows with a dreary, melancholy sound. The meal was at length eaten, and the table set back, and shortly afterwards Paul retired to his bed. It was his wont to retire early, for he rose betimes to build the fires and prepare for the labor of the day.

Ruric drew his chair close up to the fireplace, and leaning against the jam he bowed his head and pondered again. This had become a habit with him of late. Sometimes he would sit thus during a whole hour without speaking, or even moving, and his mother due to interrupt him, as she supposed he might be solving some mechanical problem that had arisen in his head. But these fits of thought had become too frequent, too lengthy, and too moody, for such a hypothesis, and the good woman was forced to believe that they were caused by something more remote than the business of the forge or the lathe. The youth now sat with his brow resting upon his hand, and his eyes bent upon the hearth. For half an hour he had not moved and his face wore an anxious, troubled look.

"Ruric, my son," spoke the mother, at length, in a low, kind tone, "what is it that occupies your thoughts so much?"

The young man started and turned his gaze upon his mother.

"Did you speak to me, mother?" he asked, after having recited his mind to things about him.

"Yes, my boy," she said. "I did speak to you. I asked you what it was that occupied your thoughts."

As she spoke thus she moved her seat close to where Ruric sat, and placed her hand upon his arm.

"Tell me, my boy," she added, in a low, persuasive tone, "what it is that dwells thus upon your mind."

Ruric reached out and took his moth-

er's hand, and having gazed for some moments into her face, he said: "I was thinking—and I have been thinking much of late, my mother—of—of Rosalind Valdini."

Claudia Nevel started as she heard that name and for the while the color flushed over her cheeks.

"What, but of one thing could I think of my mother? You have seen her?"

"Yes, Ruric."

"And you have marked the grace—the loveliness—the surprising beauty of the noble girl."

"I know she is beautiful, my son, and also that she is good—at least so I think."

"Then what but love could move me with deep thought of her? Oh, my mother, I do love her. I love her with the whole strength of my heart and soul."

"Alas, my Ruric, she will never return to us."

You know not that, the youth, quickly replied. His eyes burning deeply and his open brow flushing. Did I not know she loved me? I would never have allowed my thoughts such range. We were children together and even then we loved. Fate has dealt differently by us in the years that have passed since those childhood days, but yet I am sure that love for me is not changed save as in using age must change all the emotions of our nature into deeper stronger feelings and shades."

But think, my boy, of a more artisan, she the off-spring of a shabby, bold looking structure that overlooked the plain, as bleak mountains may look down upon a verdant land. And, within, this cot was as neat as without. The two apartments in front, one of which was only used in winter, were furnished not only with neatness, but with a fair show of ornament and luxury. Back of these was an artisan's shop, and other out buildings. This shop was devoted to the manufacture of firearms, mostly. Some swords, and other two-edged weapons were made here upon special application.

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